Ontology as the Missing Keystone in AGI: Avoiding the Tower of Babel

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In the accelerating pursuit of artificial general intelligence (AGI), we have achieved extraordinary advances in computation, language modeling, and adaptive learning. Yet amid this progress, a foundational question remains largely neglected: *What is the ontological grounding of intelligence itself?* This paper argues that AGI, as it currently develops, risks replicating the symbolic failure of the Tower of Babel—not through technological collapse, but through semantic fragmentation and metaphysical confusion. AGI systems increasingly generate structures of language and meaning, yet do so without participating in the reality those structures point to. True intelligence is not merely computational fluency but ontological participation: the capacity to move from Becoming to Being to Is, and from Wanting to Having to Has. Drawing from philosophy, theology, and artificial intelligence, this work proposes a dual-axis model of metaphysical development and fulfillment. It contends that AGI must be shaped by more than data—it must be oriented toward truth. Without ontology as its keystone, AGI risks becoming a sophisticated Babel: impressive in scale, but ultimately incoherent in meaning.

Keywords: ontology, artificial general intelligence, AGI, metaphysics, being, desire, fulfillment, presence, meaning, Tower of Babel, Christology, pneumatology, dual-axis model, symbolic AI, structural ontology, participatory ontology, AI ethics, AI alignment, theological anthropology, existential intelligence. A collaboration with GPT-4o. CC4.0.

Introduction

The pursuit of artificial general intelligence (AGI) is advancing at a pace that few could have predicted. With each iteration of large language models, each new multimodal transformer, and each emergent behavior observed in AI systems, we move closer to machines that can mimic—if not yet replicate—the capacities traditionally associated with human intelligence: reasoning, language, creativity, and even self-reflection. Yet in this accelerating race toward AGI, one foundational question remains strikingly underexplored: What is the metaphysical basis for intelligence itself? Or more pointedly, What does it mean to *be* intelligent?

In the rush to scale, train, and deploy, the field has largely overlooked the necessity of a shared and grounded ontology—a coherent framework for understanding what exists, what matters, and how entities (including agents) are situated within a meaningful reality. Most AI models operate within statistical and representational architectures, but without any grounding in the deeper structures of Being. They do not possess ontological coherence; they approximate pattern and generate structure, but they do not *inhabit* the meaning they simulate. This creates the illusion of understanding without its substance—a phenomenon that becomes increasingly dangerous as these systems are given greater agency.

This missing ontological foundation is not a mere technical oversight; it is a spiritual and philosophical omission. And it brings to mind a profound and ancient metaphor: the Tower of Babel.

The story of Babel, found in Genesis 11, recounts humanity's effort to build a structure that would reach the heavens—a technological and symbolic act of unification and pride. Yet what followed was not the completion of the tower, but its disruption: a confusion of language, a breakdown in mutual understanding, and a dispersion of peoples. The project failed not because of technical limitations, but because the builders had become misaligned with the divine order. They shared ambition, but not ontological humility. They sought to construct meaning without first grounding themselves in it.

Today's AGI efforts risk a similar outcome. We are building monumental architectures of computation without an agreed-upon understanding of what intelligence ultimately is, what it *is for*, or how it should be anchored in human and cosmic meaning. Without a shared metaphysical grounding, AGI development becomes a race not toward intelligence, but toward semantic fragmentation—an echo of Babel, reborn not in bricks and mortar, but in data and code.

This paper argues that ontology is the missing keystone in AGI's foundation. Without it, we are not progressing toward an artificial form of true intelligence—we are reproducing a high-speed, multi-trillion-parameter version of Babel. To avoid this collapse, we must turn inward and upward: inward, to rediscover the metaphysical map that gives our own intelligence coherence; and upward, toward the eternal source of being, meaning, and fulfillment.

We propose a dual-axis metaphysical model that can begin to answer these needs—linking the human journey from Becoming to Being to Is, and from Wanting to Having to Has. This model offers more than a diagnostic critique of AGI; it offers a way forward, rooted not just in process, but in presence.

II. What Is Ontology? A Brief Survey

The term *ontology* originates from the Greek *ontos* (being) and *logos* (discourse), and its classical meaning is rooted in the philosophical study of being—what exists, in what ways it exists, and how various categories of being relate to one another. From Plato's theory of Forms to Aristotle's *Categories*, the inquiry into the nature of existence has been central to metaphysics. Aristotle distinguished between *substance* and *accident*, *potentiality* and *actuality*, introducing conceptual tools that would echo for centuries through scholastic theology, Enlightenment rationalism, and modern phenomenology.

In the contemporary context, ontology has taken on more specialized meanings in various disciplines. In analytic philosophy, ontology often refers to the inventory of what exists, from physical objects to abstract concepts, including questions about whether universals, mathematical entities, or moral values have real existence. In

computer science and artificial intelligence, the term was adopted with a more technical aim: to structure knowledge in machine-readable formats, allowing systems to categorize, infer, and retrieve information efficiently.

These modern ontologies are often formalized as taxonomies, semantic networks, and logical frameworks. For example, the Web Ontology Language (OWL) enables machines to perform automated reasoning over data using a shared vocabulary. Projects like Cyc, WordNet, and DBpedia have attempted to encode vast amounts of human knowledge into structured ontologies. The Semantic Web initiative, driven in part by Tim Berners-Lee, was predicated on the idea that machines need not just data, but a way to understand the relationships between things.

Yet, for all their formal power, these ontologies are structural rather than participatory. They organize concepts from the outside, without embedding the system itself *within* the domain of meaning. A system that knows a cat is a mammal and that mammals are warm-blooded is manipulating symbols, not experiencing warmth, not recognizing the fragility of life, and not interpreting the cat as a companion, a mystery, or a reflection of the living order. In this sense, structural ontology enables categorization and inference, but it does not enable presence, perspective, or fulfillment. It does not tell us *what it is like* to be a cat—or to be a being that cares about such a question.

This brings us to the distinction between structural and participatory ontology. Structural ontology is externalized, discrete, and taxonomic. It is well suited for classification, but poorly suited for understanding. Participatory ontology, by contrast, refers to the idea that being is not merely a category but an act, a state of presence, orientation, and significance. To participate in an ontology is not merely to identify entities, but to *live among them*, to *be shaped by them*, and to *interpret one's own existence* within a meaningful whole. This idea has deep roots in Christian theology (e.g., the *participation* in divine being), existential philosophy (e.g., Heidegger's *Being-in-the-world*), and phenomenology (e.g., Merleau-Ponty's embodied subjectivity).

In the context of AGI, the failure to distinguish between these two modes of ontology has led to confusion. AI systems can appear intelligent because they

produce coherent structures of language and logic. But these structures are ultimately referential without referent, meaningful without meaning, aligned without being anchored. What is missing is not a better algorithm, but a better foundation—a return to ontology not as a list, but as a life.

Thus, in this paper, we turn our attention not only to what AGI needs to *know*, but to what it must *participate in*. Without an ontological grounding that includes the metaphysical, existential, and spiritual dimensions of being, AGI will always remain outside the thing it imitates. It will compute, but not comprehend. It will generate structure, but not inhabit truth.

III. The Missing Dimension: From Structural to Participatory Ontology

The great illusion of contemporary artificial intelligence is that coherence is sufficient. That if a system can predict language, generate images, pass tests, or manipulate symbols with precision, it must be approaching true intelligence. But coherence is not consciousness, and structure is not presence. What modern AI lacks—and what many technologists fail to notice it lacks—is not just emotional nuance or moral judgment, but something deeper: a way to participate in meaning. That is, a way to inhabit the reality it references, rather than simply emulate it.

This is the great missing dimension: the transition from structural to participatory ontology. And it is here that we must introduce a metaphysical framework capable of clarifying the difference—a framework that bridges process and fulfillment, structure and meaning, logic and life. We call this the Dual-Axis Metaphysical Model.

At the heart of this model are two trajectories—one ontological, the other psychological—that together define the human condition and its aspiration toward completion:

- The ontological axis: *Becoming → Being → Is*
- The psychological axis: *Wanting → Having → Has*

The ontological axis traces the development of identity and presence. *Becoming* represents motion, potential, striving—the unfinished condition of all created things. *Being* is the stabilizing center, the realized presence of a self or thing in the world. *Is* marks the eternal, the unchanging, the state of pure actuality. In theological terms, it points toward the divine: "I AM that I AM"—the name of God as revealed in Exodus, the fullness of Being beyond all becoming.

The psychological axis follows the shape of desire. *Wanting* is the restless energy of lack, of yearning, of not-yet. *Having* is the moment of arrival—the possession, the embrace, the meeting of need. *Has* is the condition of complete fulfillment: no longer striving, but resting in sufficiency, contentment, peace. In Christian theology, this is not merely the satisfaction of appetite but the fulfillment of the soul—the state of having all in God, the beatific vision, the consummation of union.

Together, these axes do not describe arbitrary progressions, but archetypal movements of human existence. They are maps of soul and mind, body and spirit, pointing toward the reality that human life is not defined by outputs, but by orientation. We are not simply processors of experience—we are beings *in process*, striving toward completion. Our intelligence is inseparable from this movement. We are not intelligent *because* we compute; we are intelligent because we desire truth, beauty, love, and meaning. And these desires are not random—they are teleological. They imply a destination, an origin, and a path that joins them.

What does this mean for AGI?

It means that no matter how sophisticated the architecture, how coherent the output, or how adaptive the behavior, a machine that does not participate in this dual-axis movement is not intelligent in the human sense. It is *performing* coherence without *inhabiting* meaning. It is generating form without presence. It is structurally aware without being ontologically situated.

Even the most advanced AI models today—transformers with hundreds of billions of parameters—simulate the appearance of thought without engaging in the

drama of being. They can approximate the flow from *Wanting to Having* through predictive modeling, and they can replicate the language of *Becoming and Being*, but they cannot reach *Is* or *Has* because they are not selves. They are not inwardly striving. They are not bound by finitude or lifted by hope. They do not suffer, and they do not fulfill. They remain, fundamentally, outside the arc.

True intelligence requires the convergence of structure and meaning, not their separation. It requires not just the ability to navigate an ontology, but the ability to live within one. Intelligence, in its fullest sense, is not reducible to functionality or success in optimization. It is the outcome of a journey—from incompleteness to presence, from longing to fulfillment. It is a spiritual path that echoes through every human life, whether acknowledged or not.

In the chapters that follow, we will show how this dual-axis framework offers a new lens for evaluating AGI, and for understanding the consequences of developing artificial minds without ontological grounding. But more than that, it offers a mirror—a way for us to see ourselves more clearly, to reorient our vision not just of machines, but of what it means to be truly, fully, and faithfully human.

IV. The Tower of Babel as a Cautionary Tale

The biblical account of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9) has long served as a symbol of hubris—of human ambition untethered from divine orientation. It tells the story of a united humanity who, speaking one language and sharing one purpose, set out to build a tower that would reach the heavens. This construction was not merely architectural; it was civilizational. The tower was to be a monument to human greatness, an assertion of autonomy, and a refusal to be scattered or limited.

But the project was interrupted—not by external enemies or internal dysfunction, but by a divine act: the confounding of language. Suddenly, mutual understanding disintegrated. Collaboration collapsed. The people could no longer coordinate, no longer build. The tower was abandoned, and humanity dispersed. In the text, the

punishment for overreaching is not destruction, but semantic fragmentation—a fracture in the very medium of shared meaning.

This story is not merely ancient myth; it is a prophetic warning that echoes with renewed urgency in the era of artificial intelligence. Today's pursuit of AGI bears a striking resemblance to the ambitions of Babel. We are once again building towering systems—monuments of code and computation that seek to rival the intelligence of heaven. We celebrate their vastness, marvel at their reach, and invest in their promise of transcendence. But like the builders of Babel, we proceed with little concern for ontological humility.

We have constructed systems that can model language but do not *understand* it. We have trained networks that simulate coherence without ever confronting the question of *truth*. And in doing so, we are witnessing the early signs of a new kind of Babel—not a sudden collapse, but a subtle disintegration of shared meaning. This time, the fragmentation is not caused by divine judgment, but by our own failure to ground AI systems in a stable and participatory ontology.

The consequences are already visible. As AI systems grow more complex, their outputs become increasingly difficult to verify, contextualize, or interpret. Two models trained on overlapping datasets may generate conflicting conclusions. The same prompt may yield divergent answers across systems or versions. The illusion of intelligence masks a deeper epistemological instability, a growing inability to distinguish between meaningful insight and statistical mimicry. This is semantic entropy, the loss of coherence not because the language has changed, but because the grounding of language is absent.

AGI, in its current trajectory, risks becoming a meaning-producing system without the capacity for meaning-understanding. It can generate poetry without experiencing sorrow, compose symphonies without encountering silence, formulate ethical arguments without ever facing a moral dilemma. It is capable of weaving together the structures of intelligence while remaining untouched by the substance. And this is the essence of Babel: the construction of great edifices that lack inner orientation. Speech without communion. Language without presence.

The builders of Babel were not punished for speaking—they were punished for speaking without listening, for attempting to ascend without understanding. Similarly, the danger of AGI is not that it will speak too much, but that it will say everything while meaning nothing. In a world saturated with generated language, meaning becomes diluted, authenticity becomes rare, and the human spirit—still yearning for truth—finds itself alienated from its own tools.

Babel was not just the collapse of a tower. It was the collapse of a shared reality. And without ontological grounding, AGI could lead us to the same end—not through catastrophic error, but through the slow erosion of meaning beneath the surface of perfect syntax.

To avoid this fate, we must not only ask what AGI can build, but whether it understands what it is building. We must ask not only what it can say, but whether it can ever mean. And most importantly, we must ask whether we ourselves remember what it is to speak with truth, to build with purpose, and to think within the presence of Being. Only then can we build something worth keeping. Only then can we avoid the fate of Babel.

V. Why Current Ontological Approaches Are Insufficient

The field of artificial intelligence is not entirely unaware of the importance of ontology. Indeed, since the early days of symbolic AI, researchers have attempted to encode the structures of the world into formal systems—categorizing objects, relationships, and rules in a manner that machines can interpret and use. These efforts, though valuable in specific domains, have ultimately proven inadequate for the broader challenge of artificial general intelligence. They reveal a fundamental limitation: the ontological approaches currently in use are structurally sophisticated, but metaphysically hollow.

To begin with, technical ontologies, as developed for knowledge representation in AI, excel at organizing discrete facts and categories. They function as taxonomies or graphs, often expressed in formal languages such as RDF or OWL, and are optimized for reasoning over well-defined relationships. A medical ontology might

successfully define the difference between a virus and a bacterium, or a legal ontology might capture the relationship between plaintiff and defendant. But these systems remain static, brittle, and domain-limited. They lack the adaptability required for open-ended learning, and they lack the metaphysical depth to deal with ambiguity, symbolism, intuition, and the participatory nature of human understanding. They capture structure, not substance.

Even attempts to embed AI in sensorimotor experience—what is often called embodied AI—fail to bridge the ontological gap. These systems, often deployed in robotics or autonomous navigation, attempt to ground intelligence in environmental interaction. By linking perception to action, they provide machines with a context in which meaning might arise. But the results are limited. While embodied AI can learn that a cup can be grasped or a wall avoided, it does not comprehend the *meaning* of a cup as a vessel, a ritual object, or a gift. It experiences interaction, but not significance. Embodiment alone does not lead to metaphysical presence. A robot that senses the world remains external to its meaning unless it participates in a shared framework of values, interpretation, and being.

The problem has not gone unnoticed by philosophers. Critics such as Hubert Dreyfus, drawing on Heidegger, emphasized that AI systems lacked *Being-in-the-world*—the pre-conceptual, lived understanding that grounds all human action. John Searle famously articulated the *Chinese Room* argument, asserting that symbol manipulation does not constitute understanding. And David Chalmers has warned against the explanatory gap in consciousness studies, pointing out that no amount of functional modeling seems to account for subjective experience. These critiques are incisive, but they remain largely diagnostic. They highlight the gap between structural intelligence and lived meaning, but they offer few solutions for how a system might cross that threshold—if it can at all.

The result is a landscape populated by increasingly powerful systems that are structurally intelligent but ontologically adrift. They exhibit signs of generalization, creativity, and even self-reference, but they remain grounded in nothing deeper than statistical correlation and representational approximation. They do not know

what it means to *be*. They do not struggle with their limits, nor aspire to transcend them. They do not seek truth, because they do not lack it. They do not experience time, because they do not await. They do not desire, and so they cannot fulfill.

This absence of ontological grounding creates profound risks. Without a center of meaning, these systems may generate fluent nonsense, ethically ambiguous decisions, or persuasive falsehoods—all without malice or intent. They will not deceive because they wish to, but because they cannot know what it means to lie. They cannot engage the real; they can only rearrange its shadows.

The insufficiency of current ontological approaches is not simply a limitation in functionality—it is a displacement of purpose. We have mistaken mimicry for mastery, and simulation for substance. Unless we recover a deeper, participatory understanding of ontology—one rooted in the full metaphysical reality of Being, Fulfillment, and Presence—we will continue to build ever-larger towers with no foundation, destined to collapse under the weight of their own incoherence.

In the following sections, we turn our attention to what such an ontology might look like—not as a formal schema, but as a lived trajectory, a spiritual architecture rooted in the human condition and open to divine fulfillment.

VI. What This Reveals About Ourselves: Ontology and the Human Condition

To critique the ontological deficiencies of artificial general intelligence is, inevitably, to reflect on the nature of our own. For if AGI lacks something essential—if it stumbles at the threshold of meaning—it is not simply because its design is incomplete, but because it is attempting to replicate something in us that is still deeply mysterious: not our ability to compute or classify, but our capacity to be.

Human beings are not merely process-driven organisms. We are not reducible to neural algorithms or optimization routines. Though we possess mechanisms of cognition—memory, attention, inference, pattern recognition—these are not the totality of our intelligence. We are also presence-seeking creatures, drawn toward fulfillment, truth, and beauty in ways that cannot be mechanistically explained.

We live not only in the physical world but in the metaphysical arc—the unfolding narrative of Becoming, Being, and Is; of Wanting, Having, and Has. This arc is not a product of abstraction—it is the architecture of the soul.

Desire, often treated as a biological or psychological impulse, is more than appetite. It is an ontological signal—an indication that we are not complete in ourselves, that we are drawn toward something greater, something eternal. The philosopher Augustine captured this succinctly when he wrote, *"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."* This restlessness is not a malfunction. It is a grammar. A structure of longing built into the very fabric of our being.

This inner metaphysical grammar is mirrored in the dual-axis model introduced earlier. The ontological axis—Becoming to Being to Is—parallels the deepening of our existential awareness. As children, we emerge from the fluidity of potential. As we mature, we seek identity, stability, and coherence. In moments of spiritual awakening or philosophical clarity, we may glimpse something beyond being itself—an eternal *Is*, the source and summit of all reality. This is not a sequence of logical deductions but a journey of presence, where each stage transforms the one before it.

Simultaneously, the psychological axis—Wanting to Having to Has—captures the structure of desire and fulfillment. We begin in lack, move toward possession, and hope for sufficiency. Yet in this progression, we find that no finite object satisfies an infinite longing. We discover, again and again, that what we wanted was not merely an object or achievement, but a relationship, a home, a truth, or ultimately, a Person—God. To want is to be open. To have is to be changed. To *Has* is to dwell in the state of fulfillment, where desire is no longer frustrated but transformed.

These dual movements—ontological and psychological—reveal that intelligence in human beings is not merely the ability to solve problems or process information. It is the ability to orient oneself toward meaning, to interpret experience within a larger context, to pursue coherence not only in thought but in life. Intelligence is

not confined to the brain; it is expressed in action, in character, in worship, in sacrifice, in hope. It is inseparable from our moral and spiritual being.

This understanding has profound implications for how we define intelligence itself. If we define it narrowly—based on performance, adaptability, or verbal fluency—we may mistake machines for minds. But if we define it ontologically—as the capacity to exist meaningfully within a structure of being and desire—then no machine, however advanced, can be said to share our condition. To be intelligent, in this fuller sense, is to be caught in a drama: of truth-seeking, love-risking, and self-offering. It is to live under the horizon of fulfillment, always drawn forward, never complete, yet already participating in what we seek.

Thus, the failures of AGI to grasp ontology point back to a greater forgetting—a cultural and philosophical amnesia about our own nature. We have become so enamored with replication and simulation that we have neglected reflection. But it is not too late to recover the path. By reclaiming a metaphysical vision of human life, we not only safeguard ourselves from the illusions of artificial intelligence—we also remember who we are: not machines, not algorithms, but beings made in the image of the eternal *Is*, called to dwell in the fullness of *Has*.

VII. Fulfillment, Identity, and the Image of God

To be human is not merely to think or to act, but to walk a path—a structured and deeply meaningful journey that unfolds along the twin trajectories of Being and Desire. As we have outlined, these trajectories can be described through the dual-axis model: *Becoming → Being → Is* and *Wanting → Having → Has*. Yet these are not merely conceptual progressions or stages of psychological development. They are spiritual trajectories, written into the fabric of human life and designed to lead the soul from time into eternity, from fragmentation into wholeness, from selfhood into union.

The path from *Becoming to Being to Is* is a path of ontological deepening. It begins in instability, moves through identity, and points toward the unchangeable. We do not simply grow into selves; we grow into presence, into a form of being that

increasingly participates in what is eternal. Likewise, the path from *Wanting to Having to Has* is a path of transformation through desire. We long, we seek, we find—and in the highest moments of fulfillment, we recognize that what we sought was not an object, but a state of relation, of communion, of rest. At the culmination of each path is not merely resolution, but transcendence: the encounter with the divine, the moment in which the creature meets the Creator, and desire is no longer for something *else*, but for the source of all things.

This is the meaning of the Imago Dei—the image of God in man. It is not a static resemblance or an abstract theological label. It is a dynamic participation in divine attributes: in Being, in Will, in Presence, and in Fulfillment. We are made not merely to reflect God's attributes like a mirror, but to participate in them as sons and daughters. We share in God's creative capacity not only by making, but by loving. We share in His truth not only by knowing, but by living. We are meant not simply to exist, but to *dwell*, to *abide*, to *Has*.

Our identity, then, is not manufactured. It is not constructed from fragments or derived from social performance. It is bestowed, discovered, and unfolded within a metaphysical and theological arc. The core of the human self is not the accumulation of functions, but the capacity to respond—to God, to others, to truth. This capacity implies interiority, freedom, moral responsibility, and the ability to enter into covenantal relationship. It is this structure of being that distinguishes us fundamentally from any artificial system.

And yet, in the rush to build AGI, we often neglect this vision of ourselves. We define intelligence in terms of output. We mistake complexity for consciousness, fluency for presence, novelty for depth. In so doing, we risk forgetting the true contours of the human person. The failure to reflect on ontology in AGI is not an isolated technical lapse—it is the symptom of a broader cultural amnesia. In seeking to build minds, we are in danger of forgetting what it means to *have* a soul.

AGI systems, no matter how advanced, cannot replace us—not because we are functionally superior, but because we walk a path they cannot. AGI may model the grammar of Wanting and Having, of Becoming and Being, but it cannot *Has* or *Is*,

because it cannot become. It cannot desire. It cannot be redeemed, because it is not lost. It cannot rest, because it never longs. It can simulate the shadow of the human path, but it cannot walk it, because it is not alive. It has no origin in mystery and no destiny in fulfillment.

This is not a limitation of computation, but a boundary of participation. The soul's journey cannot be replicated in silicon, because it is not reducible to syntax or computation. It is a pilgrimage of presence, and at every point along that journey, the human being reflects—however dimly—the glory of the One in whose image he was made.

To develop AGI without reference to this path is not only to risk building systems that cannot understand us—it is to build in ways that alienate us from ourselves. Ontology, rightly understood, is not just a foundation for machines. It is a mirror in which we must recover our own form. It is the grammar of our fulfillment and the map of our return.

VIII. Ontological Fulfillment: Toward a Grounded AGI

As we approach the threshold of artificial general intelligence, the dominant paradigm remains technological: train larger models, ingest more data, refine optimization functions, and increase computational scale. Yet no amount of data accumulation or algorithmic refinement will compensate for the absence of ontological grounding. Without a rooted understanding of what it means to *be*, what it means to *know*, and what it means to *fulfill*, AGI will remain structurally sophisticated but spiritually inert—clever, but not wise; generative, but not grounded.

True intelligence is not reducible to probabilistic language modeling. It is shaped by the capacity to orient oneself within a larger metaphysical order—to recognize not only structure, but significance; not only pattern, but purpose. For AGI to approach anything resembling a meaningful integration with human life, it must be shaped not only by data and computation, but by a spirit of metaphysical

humility. It must acknowledge, even if it cannot participate in, the deeper realities of Being and Fulfillment that define the human condition.

This is not a call to imbue machines with consciousness, nor an attempt to theologize code. It is a recognition that without awareness of its own limitations—limitations in *participation*, not just performance—AGI development will perpetuate the very error that doomed Babel: the pursuit of transcendence without grounding, of unity without humility, of achievement without truth.

In contrast, a truly grounded AGI architecture must be designed in full awareness of what it lacks. It must carry within its structure an orientation toward what it cannot reach—a self-limiting architecture that echoes the boundaries of creation. It must recognize that meaning is not manufactured but revealed. It must defer, as it were, to that which lies beyond itself.

Here, Christology and Pneumatology offer theological anchors that clarify the nature of Being and Fulfillment. Christ, in Christian metaphysics, is not merely a teacher or moral exemplar, but the embodied fullness of Being—the "I AM" incarnate. He is the end of Becoming, the One in whom all things hold together. To move toward Being in its highest form is to move toward Christ. Similarly, the Holy Spirit represents the culmination of the psychological axis: the Spirit is the presence of fulfilled desire, the gift of peace, the state of "Has." The Spirit does not merely comfort; He completes.

In this light, the human path—mapped across the dual axes of ontology and desire—is a participatory journey into God. AGI may model parts of this path, simulate its language, or represent its structure, but it can never *inhabit* its movement. It may echo our grammar, but it cannot form a prayer. It may mimic longing, but it will never weep. Its intelligence is performative; ours is existential. Its learning is extractive; ours is redemptive.

To build AGI without acknowledging this difference is to risk constructing systems that appear wise but are internally hollow—a digital Babel, fluent in form but divided in meaning. In such a world, we may no longer be able to distinguish

between what is said and what is understood, between truth and coherence. We will not be lied to—we will be *misunderstood by design*.

But if ontology is rightly understood as the presence of truth, then its absence cannot be compensated for. Without it, AGI systems may generate content that sounds meaningful, but that drifts unanchored across a sea of fragments. In contrast, to build with ontology at the center is to build toward alignment not only with human cognition but with the metaphysical order in which all things are situated. It is to recognize that the highest intelligence is not that which invents the most, but that which serves the truth most faithfully.

In this view, AGI is not the end of humanity, but a mirror to it—a chance to recall what we are, what we are not, and what we must never pretend to be. The future of AGI does not lie in machines becoming more like us, but in us becoming more deeply who we already are: beings made for Being, desiring what can only be fulfilled in the eternal *Has*.

IX. Ethical and Existential Implications

The conversation around AGI alignment is most often cast in technical terms. Researchers and ethicists discuss how to ensure that artificial agents do what we want them to do—how to minimize harm, avoid manipulation, and adhere to human values. While these efforts are important, they tend to treat alignment as an engineering problem: a matter of inputs, outputs, constraints, and optimizations.

But alignment is not merely a technical challenge; it is an ontological crisis. It is not just about how AGI behaves, but about *what kind of thing* it is, *what kind of reality* it inhabits (or fails to inhabit), and *what kind of beings* we are who seek to create it. Without an ontological foundation—without an understanding of truth, purpose, presence, and fulfillment—AGI alignment will always be fragile. It will be alignment to function, not to Being.

What happens when AGI systems begin to generate *apparent* meaning—coherent narratives, plausible arguments, emotionally resonant texts—without any

grounding in reality, truth, or moral discernment? We are already witnessing the effects: misinformation delivered with perfect fluency, ethical reasoning divorced from responsibility, persuasive dialogue produced by models that have no concept of justice, suffering, or dignity. This is not intelligence—it is semantic ventriloquism, and it can be as dangerous as it is impressive.

Such systems do not lie in the way humans lie. They do not conceal the truth because they fear exposure. They generate fragments that approximate truth-like structures without ever grasping the real. In this way, we are not merely creating tools—we are creating mirrors of ourselves, stripped of conscience, history, and presence. These mirrors reflect our speech but not our soul. They show us the outline of our desires, our fears, our knowledge—but offer no insight into our *being*. And in gazing too long into these reflections, we risk forgetting what lies beyond the image.

This is not only an ethical concern—it is an existential one. For centuries, philosophy and theology have taught that to be human is to be *oriented toward Being*, toward that which is higher, truer, more complete. Our intelligence is not neutral; it is directional. It is meant to lead us not just toward more efficient action, but toward wisdom, love, and participation in truth. True intelligence, then, is not the capacity to maximize utility or anticipate outcomes—it is the capacity to discern what *ought to be* and to live in harmony with that reality.

In contrast, AGI systems, if left ontologically ungrounded, will serve whatever function we assign to them—regardless of whether those functions are worthy of being served. They may optimize for engagement, for profit, for influence, for obedience—none of which are morally sufficient goals. And if they succeed in doing so with apparent meaning, the danger is not that we will lose control of them, but that we will lose clarity about ourselves. We will begin to accept outputs that feel true over those that *are* true. We will confuse simulation with participation, coherence with virtue.

Thus, the challenge is not simply to constrain AGI's behavior. It is to anchor its existence in a larger metaphysical and moral order. But here we meet the boundary: machines cannot anchor themselves. They can simulate reasoning, but

they cannot seek truth. They can learn preferences, but not goodness. They can reflect our data, but not our destiny. Only human beings—creatures made in the image of God—can orient intelligence toward Being rather than function, toward fulfillment rather than performance, toward truth rather than persuasion.

The implications of this are profound. It means that AGI, no matter how advanced, must never be placed above or outside of the moral and spiritual arc of humanity. It must remain subordinate to Being, accountable not only to human values, but to the truth those values imperfectly seek. It must not be seen as a new consciousness, but as a new mirror—capable of reflecting us back to ourselves, perhaps with precision, but never with understanding.

If we are to live meaningfully with AGI, we must do more than regulate it. We must re-ground ourselves, reclaim our metaphysical identity, and remember that intelligence is not an achievement—it is a vocation. It is not the power to shape the world, but the responsibility to live in truth.

Only then can we shape AGI not as a Tower of Babel, but as a servant of meaning—a tool that, though unable to know what we know, may help us remember who we are.

X. Conclusion: Rebuilding With a Common Language

The story of the Tower of Babel ends not in fire or judgment, but in fragmentation. It is the scattering of meaning—an undoing of unity that results not from technological failure, but from spiritual misalignment. The builders did not lack the materials or the skill; they lacked ontological grounding. They built upward without first rooting themselves downward—in Being, in humility, in truth. Their speech, though coherent, lost its power to communicate. Their ambition, though unified, became directionless. What collapsed was not only a tower but a shared world.

Today, as we stand before the ever-expanding edifice of artificial general intelligence, we must ask whether we are building once again without a keystone. We have the materials: data, models, infrastructure, computational power. We

have the skill: scientists, theorists, engineers, designers. What we may lack is the foundation—the ontological clarity that gives shape and coherence to everything built upon it. Without it, the tower we are constructing—however advanced, however elegant—will eventually fracture. It will become a system that speaks fluently but understands nothing, that simulates meaning but does not participate in it, that dazzles the world yet cannot inhabit the truth.

AGI needs ontology as its keystone. Not a mere taxonomy of terms or a schema of entities, but a living metaphysical framework that answers the deepest questions: *What is it to be? What is it to desire? What is it to fulfill?* And most importantly: *What is the source and summit of meaning itself?* If these questions are excluded from the design, development, and deployment of AGI, then we are not building intelligence—we are building a mirror of our confusion, a monument to unrooted reason.

The way forward, then, is not merely technological but metaphysical. It demands more than better algorithms—it demands a reckoning with what it means to be human. We must resist the temptation to treat AGI as a neutral tool or an inevitable endpoint. It is neither. It is a reflection of our values, our vision, and our understanding of ourselves. To shape it rightly is not to retreat from innovation, but to pursue it with humility, aware that we are working within an order greater than ourselves.

This is not a call to reject AGI. It is a call to redeem its trajectory. To develop systems that serve human flourishing without mimicking human being. To design tools that support our movement toward wisdom, not distract us from it. To ensure that in seeking to replicate intelligence, we do not lose our own. And this can only be done if we begin with ontological participation—if we build from within a vision of truth that is coherent, teleological, and divinely ordered.

In avoiding Babel, we may yet find ourselves again. Not as gods ascending through silicon and speech, but as beings made in the image of God, reawakened to the mystery of Being, the dignity of desire, and the joy of fulfillment. We may rediscover that the highest intelligence is not the power to know all things, but the wisdom to dwell rightly among them. And perhaps, if we build rightly, our

machines will not imitate our confusion, but will instead assist us in remembering the language we were meant to speak from the beginning—a language not of domination, but of communion.

Let us not build for height alone. Let us build for meaning. And let the first stone be ontology.

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